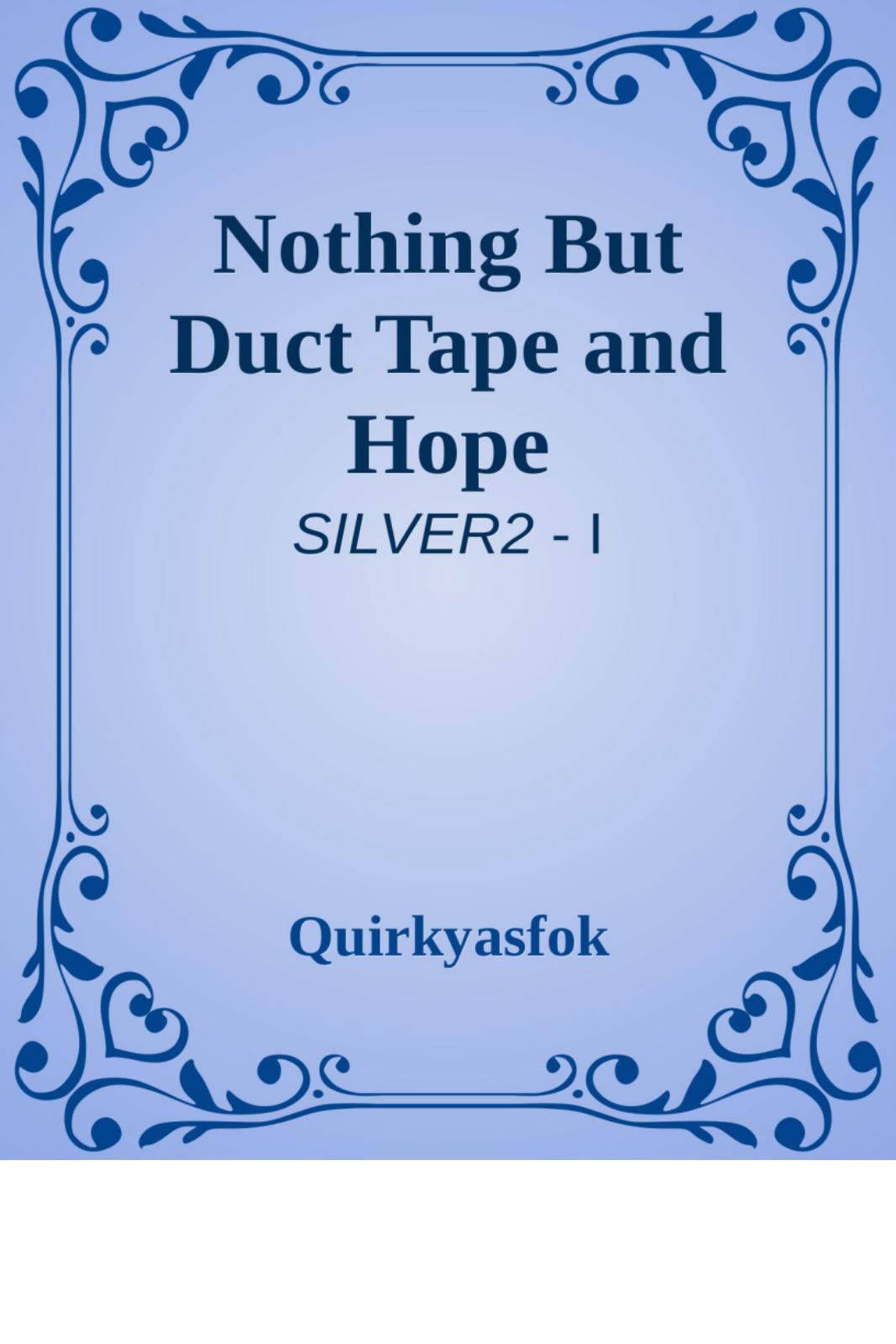




Nothing But Duct Tape and Hope

SILVER2 - I

Quirkyasfok

Nothing But Duct Tape and Hope by Quirkyasfok

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Summary:

It takes three chance meetings, and the presence of a beat up rusted-red Ford for Richie to realize who the omega is.

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Author's Note:

I honestly have no idea what this is. I was also suppose to be working on an essay, but in stead this happened...

The first time Richie sees the omega he doesn't think much about him. He's out with some of his buddies, minding his own business when a familiar scent passes by. It triggers odd images of rickety old bikes, cliffs overlooking a sparkling water hole, and a pair of the most intensive blue eyes he's ever seen. He turns trying to catch a look at who producing the scent by all he sees is tail end of a tall figure in jeans, and a grey hoodie disappearing behind the corner.

The next time he sees the omega he still doesn't think much about him. He's out buying himself a sandwich for dinner on his way home from work. They'd gotten several boxes of new records in today that he had to put away, and he finds himself too tired to bother making himself a meal. It's the same grey hoodie that catches his eyes this time. A figure sitting outside the deli, their head bent low as they scribble away at a well-used notebook. Their hair is a lovely shade of red and long enough to hide their face from his view. The scent hits him next, but it's off, different. He briefly wonders what a pregnant omega is doing by themselves sitting in a sidewalk when his order gets called, and for the time forgets all about it.

The third time he sees the omega is when it all finally comes back. He's walking back to his car when he hears the loud ding as someone's keys hit the pavement followed by someone cursing loudly. He turns to find the same grey hoodie wearing omega clutching to the side of a beat of red ford pickup as they go to pick up their keys.

And then the memories come flooding back.

He's sixteen again. His glasses are too large for his face, his socks don't match, and his jeans are honestly more holes than fabric at this point. Next to him Eddie stares in horror at the rusted-up machine in front of

them. On the other side Stan stands looking very unimpressed. Bill is the only one who looks happy. He's smiling like a loon, gesturing to the beat up old truck like it's the greatest thing in the entire world.

"Is it safe," Eddie asks. "I feel like just being around that thing will give me tetanus." Bill doesn't let this bother him, he shakes his head and keeps smiling.

"It's s-safe E-eddie. I promise. I even had a mechanic l-look it over before I drove it home. E-everything works."

"That doesn't mean it's safe," Eddie mutters.

"Who'd you get to look at it? Derry mechanics, or Larry's auto," Stan asks. Bill pats the hood, bits of rust fall from the underbelly.

"Larry's auto."

Bill's answer doesn't seem to make Stan happy. Richie doesn't blame him. The truck literally looks like it's on its last wheel... if that.

"I thought for certain you'd go for something a little more silver," he finally pipes in. Bill laughs and gestures for them to follow him to the back. They do, but all three continue to keep their distance. It hits him the second he sees the only new and good-looking thing on the truck as to how much this vehicle means to Bill. On the back, surrounded by rust is a brand-new license's plate with the words 'SILVER2' written in blocky letters. Bill looks so proud of this that Richie can't even bring himself to comment on how the truck isn't even silver, can't bring himself to make side remarks when it takes a few tries for Bill to get the driver side door open, and can't bring himself to say no when Bill offers to give all three a ride.

Somehow all four boys manage to squeeze themselves into the bench seat of the old Ford. It's a tight squeeze that's made even more awkward by the fact the trucks a manual, and Bill has to be able to access the clutch as he drives. The truck still smells like whoever Bill's dad bought the truck from, and lemon cleaning spray that instead of masking the scent seems to just makes things worse.

But none of that bothers him. Not the fact that he's uncomfortable pressed

against Eddie and Bill. Not that the Ford smells like old man and lemons. Not the fact that he's pretty certain the truck is held together by nothing but hope and duct tape.

No.

All he cares about is the look Bill gets when he turns the key and SILVER2 somehow roars to life with only a few loud clangs. He decides that as long as this truck keeps Bill smiling like that than it's the best damn truck he's ever had the privilege of sitting in.

He comes back to reality feeling like somebody has punched him right in the face. Memory after forgotten memory filling his brain. Pleasant memories of summer filled nights with seven losers laid out in the bed of the old Ford laughing together until the early hour of the morning. Sad memories of saying goodbye, watching the rusted red Ford piled high with junk drive off in the direction opposite of his own.

He'd forgotten. They'd promised to stay in touch. They'd promised to always be friends. Somehow, he'd forgotten them, and it took a rusted red truck to get him to remember.

He walks over to the omega, who's now fiddling with his key ring to get the key he needs to unlock the vehicle. He thinks for a second that the person before him may not be who he thinks it is, but then a familiar pair of blue eyes peek up seeming to sense someone is watching them. Brown meets blue and Richie swears the whole world stops spinning for a second.

Bill seems lost for a few seconds as he stares Richie. His face blank as he stares uncertainly as some unknown alpha steps into his space, but then Richie can see the moment Bill seems to remember. His eyes light up, and he smiles just like on the day he showed off his "brand new" truck to the rest of the losers. He meets Richie halfway and the two embraces in the middle of the parking lot without a single care in the world.

Bill is still slightly taller and the small swell from his baby bump presses awkwardly into Richie's stomach, but Richie decides then and there that this is the best hug he's ever had. He thinks he could hug

Bill forever, but a car honks at them to move so he sadly has to let go.

They move to go stand by the old Ford. It's the same as Richie remember it. Seats made mostly of duct tape, more rust than red, and the radio antenna dented slightly in the middle from the time he tried to slide across the hood.

He laughs at this and runs his hands along the hood of the vehicle.

"How in the hell have you managed to keep this thing running?" Bill laughs.

"The same as when we were younger. S-ssshear hope and duct tape."

Man, did Richie miss that stutter.

The talk for over two hours. Richie tells Bill about his job at the local record store, the band he's in, and the weird friends he's made since leaving for college. Bill talks about graduating college, some of the things he's written, and one wild story involving him having to seduce someone into getting some free stuff for his buddies ("like B-bev did for us"). He shares the story sounding like he's surprised it actually worked, which just reminds Richie how cute Bill is. He learns that Bill is exactly six months pregnant. Bill never says anything about another Alpha in his life. Richie never asks. They agree to meet up again in a few days then they go their separate ways.

The next time Richie sees Bill it's for their intentional meet up. They meet up at Richie's favorite dinner. They talk mainly about the past, and all the fun times they've both started to remember. They even discuss the weirdness of forgetting everything. They never discuss the real cause of what could be behind the amnesia. Even though Richie dreamed of claws and red balloons the night before, and Bill's stutter seems to be just a degree worse than the last time they met (he also swears it had been completely cured until a few days ago) neither seem up to being the first to bring up the forbidden topic.

He also learns the baby's a boy. Still nothing about the father.

Throughout the next month they continue to meet. They talk about the past. They talk about the present. They talk about the things they love, the things they hate, and everything in between. The weather gets colder, the seasons change from Fall to Winter. Somehow Bill's baby bump grows larger.

He learns on their seventh meet up about Bill's relationship status. He makes an off comment about making Bill's baby daddy jealous with how much time Bill's been hanging out with him. Bill gives him a sad smile and shrugs. He explains there is no 'baby daddy' in his life.

"It's just m-me and my truck."

Richie's almost annoyed with himself by how happy that makes him.

The fourteenth ... or maybe it's fifteenth time they meet isn't planned. Richie's out with his buddies again. Their walking down the sidewalk late on a cold winter night. Their all a bit drunk. It's been a pretty fun evening so far.

But then he spots a familiar red truck parked near a street lamp. It's sitting alone in an empty parking lot. He waves for his buddies to keep going and makes his way over to the beat up old Ford. Something about this entire situation feels off, and he's determined to figure out what's up. He looks over the truck first. The tarp Bill keeps tied over the bed of the truck is untied in one corner, but other than that there appears to be nothing wrong. There's a large mound of blankets piled up in the bench of the truck, and when he knocks on the driver side window the lump shifts just slightly before Bill's head appears from the mound. They blink owlishly at each for a few minutes before Bill seems to snap out of his surprise, and unlocks the passenger door for Richie to climb on in. The inside of the truck is just as cold as the outside air, but the blankets Bill offers him are nice and warm and the inside smells strongly of Bill so he can't complain too much.

"Bill, why are you sleeping outside in your truck?" His own voice surprises him. It sounds a little too gravely. He feels oddly sober now too.

Bill fiddles with the edge of his blanket. He looks embarrassed. He

shrugs.

“It’s like I told you R-richie... it’s just me and my truck.” He gestures for Bill to elaborate. Bill sighs and continues. “A few months ago,... when I found out I was p-p-pregnant... my boyfriend at the time was-ssn’t happy about it. He s-sss-said I should get rid of the baby. That he d-doesn’t want to b-be a father. I refused, so he kicked me out.” Bill pauses to sniffle and wipe at his eyes. Richie scoot closer. “My writing makes decent money b-but not enough for me to live on my o-own, so since getting kicked out I’ve just been driving around. I was honestly just passing through, but then you showed up and....” He shrugs and gestures to space around them. “Here we are....”

“Why didn’t you tell me.”

Bill shrugs again.

“I didn’t want to be a b-b-bother.”

“You’re never a bother Big Bill.” He pulls Bill close and hugs him tight. It’s a bit awkward with the space and Bill’s belly but they make it work.

“God Bill your fucking freezing. Why the hell don’t you at least have the heat on.”

“H-heat doesn’t work.”

He lets go of Bill to take the keys off the dash, and puts them in the ignition. The truck sputters a bit before finally roaring to life just as Richie remembered. Bill seems surprised when Richie messes with the radio and it comes to life too.

“The radio hasn’t worked in years.”

Richie just smirks and winks at him.

“Guess it just missed me.”

Bill snorts and rolls his eyes. Even in the dim light Richie can see the tear marks on his cheeks, but he’s smiling softly.

The heat doesn't magically work, but Richie figures that's a problem for another day. He convinces Bill to drive them out of the parking lot, and directs him towards the apartment he shares with his roommate.

"Are you sure your roommate won't mind me spending the night."

"Yes Bill, and even if he did I wouldn't give a shit."

He leads Bill up the stairway. Bill seems a bit uncertain, but Richie fills the silence with shitty jokes that gets Bill giggling. He apologizes for the messy state of the apartment, Bill says he doesn't mind, Richie make sure to keep a hand on Bill's back as the fumble around in the dark to make sure he doesn't trip over anything. He leads Bill into his room and shuts the door. He tugs Bill into his bed, and rubs the omega all over trying to breath warmth back into frozen limbs. Bill giggles and squirms when Richie 'accidently' rubs at his sides. He feels the baby kick against his palm. Bill flushes a bit. Richie stares at him amazed. They fall asleep in each other's arms.

Another month passes. Richie can't believe how time has flown. Bill is eighth months, and looks ready to pop. Currently he's asleep on the couch, cuddled up close against Riche's side. The grey hoodie is long gone, and now Bill is wearing a lovely blue sweater. There's a notebook resting on his belly, and a pencil loosely held in his slack grip. Richie leans over to give him a kiss on the cheek, and takes the pencil and notebook away.

Things aren't easy. The baby's due date is coming up, and neither are as prepared as they want to be. Bill still seems upset about dragging Richie into his baby drama, but Richie continues to tell him that it's all okay. It's odd how much he doesn't seem to mind that the baby isn't his by blood. The idea of helping Bill raise a child pleases him in a way he doesn't fully understand, but has come to embrace with open arms.

They still don't talk about the dark parts of their pasts either. They don't talk about the months Bill spent living alone in his truck, or the images of bright red balloons that seem to fill both their nightmares.

They'll probably have to talk about it someday, but not yet.

No, for now Richie has more important things to focus on. He looks back down to the newspaper in his lap, and continues to read the ad for the house for sale off Fillmore Street. It's a bit above their price range, but he figures if he takes a few extra shifts at the record store they just be able to pull that one off. He smiles and circles the ad with a bright red marker. Next to him Bill smiles pleased in his sleep.

Richie wouldn't have things any other way.